

Billingshurst Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125923
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	328421
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Wood HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Green
Headteacher	Miss S Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 October 2005
School address	Upper Station Road Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9RE
Telephone number	01403 782789
Fax number	01403 783124

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

At Billingshurst Infant School, the majority of pupils come from the local area and are predominantly from White British backgrounds. There are very low levels of pupil mobility, although there has been some variation between year groups. The proportion of boys to girls is higher than is the case nationally. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception year.

A newly appointed acting headteacher has been in post since January and the school shares its site with the local junior school and secondary school. An initial consultation is under way with regard to a proposed amalgamation with the junior school from September 2010.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features and is improving in a number of key areas. The acting headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by the acting assistant headteacher and middle leaders. They know the school well and have an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. All of the required improvements identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed and there is a clear commitment by all staff in the school to improve further. The school manages its resources and deploys teachers and other members of staff efficiently. Consequently, there is good capacity to improve.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school are outstanding. They find learning exciting because teaching is good and the outstanding curriculum is specifically adapted to meet their needs and interests. Teachers and other adults work together effectively to assess pupils' progress and plan work that is fun and varied and helps them to develop academically and socially. However, sometimes this information does not always lead to work that stretches pupils quickly enough, particularly the most able. The school's good focus on developing basic skills through literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) means that pupils are prepared successfully for their future lives. As a result, pupils make good progress throughout Reception and Key Stage 1 and achieve standards that are above average by the time they leave Year 2.

Pupils are well cared for and feel safe in school. They have very good relationships with their peers and adults and their personal development is outstanding. They understand extremely well the importance of staying healthy and know how to make the right choices. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to contribute positively to the school and local community and are actively involved in raising money for a number of charities. They have a growing understanding of the wider world but do not currently have sufficient opportunities to learn about the many different types of people who live in Britain today. The school has not done enough yet to plan at a strategic level to ensure that it meets all of the requirements concerning community cohesion.

The school actively builds close links with its parents. The vast majority of parents who responded to the parental questionnaire were supportive of the work of the school. Parents said that they felt welcome in the school and that teachers were approachable, providing purposeful opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. Inspectors agree with the many parents who say that their children enjoy coming to school because they are treated as individuals and develop very well because of the good care and teaching. As one parent commented, 'Billingshurst Infant School has given both my children the greatest first step on the educational ladder.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective and promotes children's personal development and social skills to a high level. Children make good progress from broadly average starting points. The newly appointed assistant headteacher has

accurately assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has begun to build on what is already in place.

Teachers and their support staff are skilled practitioners and work well together. The support for children's academic and personal needs is high and good links exist between parents and the local community. A visit from the local road safety liaison officer had resulted in a keen interest in running the police station set up in one of the classrooms. The curriculum covers the six areas of learning, and space both inside and outside the classroom is well used. Time outside the classroom is managed and supervised well. Resources are good and plentiful, and are organised so that children experience learning in all areas of the curriculum, including the use of the hall for their physical development. This good provision and the consistent approach across all three classes enables children to choose where they want to play and learn. Consequently, children develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT to a good level and are prepared effectively for more formal work in Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use existing assessment information more effectively to ensure that teachers' planning enables all pupils to do work that is suitably challenging, so that progress accelerates and standards rise further.
- Plan at a strategic level so that the school promotes community cohesion more widely and develops children's understanding of diverse cultures and lifestyles in multicultural Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 have been consistently above average for several years. In 2008, standards in reading improved sharply, with those attained in mathematics also rising. Compared with the national averages, boys achieved exceptionally well in reading and girls in mathematics. Standards reached in other subjects are also above average.

The school sets challenging targets that the majority of pupils meet. Children enter the school with skills and experiences typical of their age. They make good progress during their Reception year in all areas of learning and this is sustained during Key Stage 1 because of the good teaching and outstanding curriculum. In some cases, the progress made by the more able is not as rapid as it should be, particularly in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are polite and courteous, and take a pride in their work. They are confident individuals who enjoy coming to school every day. As one pupil said, 'I wish I could come at weekends too.'

Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils study other religions of the world and celebrate festivals from other cultures. They are

developing a good understanding of moral conduct through a well-planned personal, social and health education programme. They are tolerant of each other and understand the differences between people in their immediate community. However, they do not fully understand yet what it is to live in a multicultural Britain.

Pupils are very knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and can make their own good choices. They participate actively in physical education and benefit from learning how to grow vegetables in the school 'garden' and through opportunities to look after animals such as the school's chickens. Pupils are very keen to save the environment, participate actively in the Eco Club and speak about their desire to increase the amount of recycling they are doing. They also make a positive contribution to their life in the community by regularly visiting the church and older citizens of the village. Children feel safe in school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching throughout the school promotes excellent attitudes, encourages independence and ensures that pupils take a pride in their work. Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships as well as their brisk pace, good use of active approaches such as 'Kung Fu Punctuation' and the effective use of ICT. Teaching assistants and other adults provide pupils with focused support, such as in the highly effective guided reading sessions.

Teachers' secure subject knowledge and thorough assessment enable them to plan work that is usually well matched to the needs of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. At times, however, planning does not enable pupils to tackle the more challenging work quickly enough. Too much time is spent consolidating what pupils already know. Work is marked well and offers suggestions to pupils about how they can improve it. As a result, pupils understand their personal targets and explain confidently the work they are doing. In the best instances, pupils take responsibility for improving their work because of the established routines and the resources that are available.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils are keen learners and apply themselves fully because the curriculum is outstanding. Through an emphasis on creativity, cross-curricular links and a clear focus on progression in skills, it promotes good academic progress and excellent personal development. Good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT prepares pupils successfully for their future lives.

Teachers work closely to plan and monitor the curriculum and they modify it regularly so that it meets the specific needs of different groups of pupils. A very successful Year 1 unit about 'Pirates' was skilfully adapted so that the books the pupils read were of interest to both boys and girls and were accessible to a group of underachieving readers.

Pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that include dance, karate, French and a popular gardening club. Regular visits and visitors bring the curriculum to life and help pupils understand the relevance of their learning. A recent visit from 'The Jolly Postman' provided an imaginative and effective stimulus for letter writing. In recent years, pupils in Year 2 have had the opportunity to gain a certificate in first aid following a course delivered by St John Ambulance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The high level of commitment of staff results in pupils being confident, happy and eager to learn. Pupils are well cared for in the school and respond to this with excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes.

Effective strategies promote pupils' social and economic well-being and an understanding and tolerance of each other's individuality. Health and safety around the school is promoted well and there is a high level of adult supervision. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements.

Assessment procedures are in place and are analysed closely by senior leaders. Teachers assess pupils in classrooms but this information does not always lead to challenging work being set, especially for the most able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

At all levels, there is a strong desire and commitment to promote high quality education and care. The school provides good value for money because resources are used wisely. The school's good self-evaluation has led to improvements in a number of areas. Teaching and support staff are deployed efficiently so that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most vulnerable, are supported well.

A strong curriculum promotes pupils' tolerance and understanding of each other and their specific community and ensures equality of opportunity. However, the school has not yet developed a clear strategy for promoting community cohesion, building on the work that it already does within the school and local area.

Governors are supportive of the school and offer good challenge. They discharge their responsibilities fully through their committee structures and meetings with the headteacher. However, they rely too much on reports from the local authority's school improvement partner and the headteacher and not enough on making their own direct observations about the school's work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise Standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



11 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Billingshurst Infant School, Billingshurst RH14 9RE

Thank you for your help when we visited recently to see what your school is like and how well you do in your lessons. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you around the school. This is what we found out.

You go to a good school. You enjoy going to school and work hard in your lessons. You get along well with each other and like your teachers and the other adults who work with you. They plan fun and interesting lessons that help you to learn and do well at things like reading, writing and mathematics. We were also impressed by how well you were using computers to help you with your work. We could tell you were doing well from the lessons we watched and by looking at your work. Sometimes you do not always get onto the more difficult things quickly enough, which would help you do even better.

You told us that you like being healthy and enjoy the different sporting activities you do. You also told us that you feel safe at school. If you have any problems, you know you can go to a teacher for help. You love learning about the environment and want to help by doing more recycling and saving water. We were interested in finding out about the vegetables you were growing and the chickens that you care for. At school, you learn a lot about the people who live near you as well as those from other countries, but you do not always learn so much about the many different kinds of people who live in other parts of our country.

We have asked your school to make your learning even better by:

- helping you to do more challenging work more quickly in your lessons
- helping you to learn about the many different kinds of people who live in Britain today.

You can also help by continuing to try your best in lessons and by continuing to get along so well with your friends, teachers and other adults.

Yours faithfully

Chris Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector